

# Do Campaigns Matter?

## The US Presidential Campaign in Comparative Perspective

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**Time: Tuesdays, 14.00 - 15.45**

**Location: AFL-E-003**

*"I've always felt it [data] was overrated [...] Obama got the votes much more so than his data processing machine.  
And I think the same is true with me."*

Donald J. Trump, Interview with the Associated Press, 10 May 2016.

### **Aims of the Course**

This course takes the example of the 2016 US Presidential Election campaign, the race between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, to introduce students to the main theories and methods of studying modern election campaigns in the United States and in Western Europe. Students further learn about the major cornerstones of a modern, data-driven election campaign, and gain the skills to evaluate different campaign tactics and strategies. The course addresses the question if and how campaigns matter. It aims to equip students with an understanding of both the larger social and political trends, and the methods and science driving the 2016 Presidential Election.

### **Teaching**

Florian Foos has worked with political campaigns in several countries to identify the effects of campaign interventions on political activism, voter persuasion and electoral mobilization. The course features distinguished guest speakers working in politics and campaign analytics on both sides of the pond including Kevin Collins (Director of Research, Analyst Institute, Washington DC), Rowenna Davis (former Labour Parliamentary Candidate, Southampton), and Marco Kistler (Head Movement Politics, Swiss Social Democratic Party, Bern).

## Learning Outcomes

- Gain advanced knowledge of US politics, and understand the theoretical foundations of research on election campaigns.
- Gain the ability to compare the 2016 campaign across time and space.
- Gain the skills to critically evaluate claims made in the media about the impact of campaigns and campaign events.
- Gain a firm understanding of different methods of studying electoral behavior and campaign effects.
- Be able to apply one or more methods of studying campaign effects in an original research paper, your BA thesis.
- Learn to analyze big data used by real-world campaigns for targeting and impact evaluation.
- Learn how to evaluate polls and to critically judge the “state of the race”
- Learn to communicate your knowledge to an interested, but non-expert audience in form of a blog post.

## Election Night

We will watch Election Night on Tuesday 8 November together. Throughout the evening we will stream classics of the campaign movie genre and watch the results come in accompanied by pizza and drinks.

## Evaluation

### Fall Term

20% 2 Classroom Quizzes, 30% Blog Entry, 50% BA-Thesis Research Design

### Spring Term

100% of your mark will consist of your BA-thesis of 8'000-10'000 words. You can choose to write on any of the topics or a combination of topics discussed in the seminar. The thesis will be based on quantitative/qualitative analysis of original campaign data and/or electoral data sources.

## Evaluation Timetable Term 1

- Week 6: Quiz 1
- Week 10: Quiz 2
- Weeks 3-10: Each student is asked to write one blog entry of 1000 words on a topic of interest related to the US Presidential campaign. The order of blog posts is determined at random.
- 06/01/2017 Submission of Research Design.

## Required reading

Texts marked as Compulsory Reading are exactly that. I expect you to have read these papers, book chapters or blogs *before* coming to class. Supplementary Reading is not compulsory, but will cover additional aspects of the topic that will be raised in class. Those readings will help you get a more *in depths* understanding of the topic and they are a great place to start if you would like to write a blog post or your final research design paper on this topic.

## Books:

- Albertson, Bethany and Shana Kushner Gadarian. *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*. New York: Cambridge University Press (available online through University network).
- Aldrich, John H. 2006. *Why Parties? A Second Look*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brady, Henry E. and Richard Johnston, eds. 2006. *Capturing Campaign Effects*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press.
- Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel and John Zaller. 2008. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Erikson, Robert S. and Christopher Wlezien. 2012. *The Timeline of Presidential Elections. How Campaigns Do and (Do Not) Matter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ford, Robert and Matthew Goodwin. 2014. *Revolt on the Right: Explaining Support for the Radical Right in Britain*. New York: Routledge.
- García Bedolla, Lisa and Melissa R. Michelson. 2012. *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber. 2015. *Get Out the Vote. How to Increase Voter Turnout*. 3rd edition. Brookings Institution Press.
- Hersh, Eitan. 2015. *Hacking the Electorate How Campaigns Perceive Voters*. New York: Cambridge University Press (available online through University network).
- Holbrook, Thomas. 1996. *Do Campaigns Matter?* Sage Publications.
- Kleis Nielsen, Rasmus. 2012. *Ground Wars: Personalized Communication in Political Campaigns* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kreiss, Daniel. 2016. *Prototype Politics. Technology-Intensive Campaigning and the Data of Democracy*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Sides, John and Lynn Vavreck. 2013. *The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Silver, Nate. 2013. *The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail—but Some Don't* . New York: Penguin Books.
- Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## Online Resources

### Election Predictions and Poll Aggregators

- FiveThirtyEight: <http://fivethirtyeight.com>
- The Upshot: [http://www.nytimes.com/upshot/?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/upshot/?_r=0)
- HuffPolster: <http://elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster>
- RealClearPolitics: <http://www.realclearpolitics.com>

### Data Journalism

- The Monkey Cage - John Sides, Andrew Gelman and others: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/>
- Vox - Ezra Klein: <http://www.vox.com>

## Movies about Campaigns

- **Weiner:** Documents Anthony Weiner's unsuccessful 2013 run for Mayor of New York City. Must see study of a flawed candidate and a campaign in full on crisis mode.
- **Mitt:** Behind the scenes documentary of Mitt Romney's 2012 Presidential campaign.
- **Game Change:** Excellent movie about McCain's 2008 Presidential campaign told from the perspective of campaign advisor Steve Schmidt.
- **The War Room:** Documents Bill Clinton's 1992 Presidential campaign from the perspective of his campaign advisors. Classic of the genre.

## Fall Term: Timetable

### 1 Context

#### Week 1 – 20/09/2016 –Introduction

The primaries, state of the race, polling and forecasting.

##### Compulsory Reading:

- The Party Decides, chapters 2 and 6.
- Azari, Julia: What if the party decided not to decide?  
<http://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2016/1/26/10834512/party-decides-establishment>
- Hall, Andrew B. 2015. What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries? *American Political Science Review* 109(1): 18-42.
- Silver, Nate: How I Acted Like A Pundit And Screwed Up On Donald Trump: <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-i-acted-like-a-pundit-and-screwed-up-on-donald-trump/>

##### Supplementary Reading:

- The Signal and the Noise: Introduction, Chapter 2.
- The Upshot: Who will be President?  
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/upshot/presidential-polls-forecast.html>

## Week 2 – 27/09/2016 – Anxious Politics and the Rise of Trump

- Fear and anxiety in politics, the immigration issue, misinformation and conspiracy theories, identity politics, the white working class and the rise of the radical right.
- We will view parts of the first presidential debate

### Compulsory Reading:

- Anxious Politics, chapters 1 and 3.
- Revolt on the Right, introduction, chapter 4.
- Valenzuela, Ali A., and Melissa R. Michelson. 2016. Turnout, Status, and Identity: Mobilizing Latinos to Vote with Group Appeals. *American Political Science Review*.

### Supplementary Reading:

- Oliver, Eric J. and Thomas J. Wood. 2014. Conspiracy Theories and the Paranoid Style(s) of Mass Opinion. *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4): 952-966.
- Klar, Samara. 2013. The Influence of Competing Identity Primes on Political Preferences. *Journal of Politics* 75(4): 1108-1124.

## 2 Methodological Perspectives

### Week 3 – Thursday 04/10/2016 – Studying Campaign Effects

- Panel data, experimental methods, qualitative methods.

### Compulsory Reading:

- Capturing Campaign Effects, “Three Virtues of Panel Data for the Analysis of Campaign Effects”.
- Arceneaux, Kevin. 2010. The Benefits of Experimental Methods for the Study of Campaign Effects. *Political Communication* 27(2): 199-215.
- Ground Wars, Prologue, chapter 1.

### Supplementary Reading:

- Foos, Florian. 2015. Bringing the Party Back in: Mobilization and Persuasion in Constituency Election Campaigns. D.Phil Thesis. University of Oxford, introduction.
- Capturing Campaign Effects, “The Rolling Cross-Section and Causal-Attribution”.

### 3 Theoretical Perspectives

#### Week 4 – 11/10/2016 – Do campaigns matter?

- *Minimal* effects hypothesis vs. *balanced* campaign hypothesis, the timeline of elections

##### Compulsory Reading:

- Do Campaigns Matter?, chapter 1.
- The Gamble, chapters 1 and 6.
- The Timeline of Presidential Elections, chapter 8.

#### Week 5 – 18/10/2016 – How do campaigns matter?

- Persuasion vs base mobilization; changing the composition of the electorate, do candidates matter?

##### Compulsory Reading:

- Panagopoulos, Costas. 2016. All about that base: Changing campaign strategies in U.S. Presidential elections. *Party Politics* 22(2): 179-190.
- Foos, Florian and Peter John. *forthcoming*. Parties are No Civic Charities: Voter Contact and the Changing Partisan Composition of the Electorate. *Political Science Research & Methods*.
- Foos, Florian. 2016. First Impressions. Persuasion Field Experiments using Campaign Canvassing Data. Working paper.

##### Supplementary Reading:

- Jacobson, Gary C. 2015. How Do Campaigns Matter? *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 31-47.
- Bailey, Michael A., Daniel J. Hopkins, and Todd Rogers. 2016. Unresponsive and Unpersuaded: The Unintended Consequences of a Voter Persuasion Effort. *Political Behavior* 38(3):713-746.

### 4 Elements of a Modern Campaign

#### Week 6 – 25/10/2016 – Big Data and Clinton’s Geek Advantage

- The use of big data in campaigns; targeting; why are Democrats “better” at using data?

- **Guest speaker via videolink: Kevin Collins (Director of Research, Analyst Institute, Washington DC)**
- **Meeting with Rowenna Davis (former Labour Parliamentary Candidate) on 26/10/2016**

Compulsory Reading:

- Nickerson, David and Todd Rogers. 2014. Political Campaigns and Big Data. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 28(2), 51-74.
- Hacking the Electorate, introduction, chapters 1 and 6.
- Prototyp Politics, chapters 1 and 7

Supplementary Reading:

- Nyhan, Brendan and Jacob Montgomery. 2015. Connecting the Candidates: Consultant Networks and the Diffusion of Campaign Strategy in American Congressional Elections. *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2): 292-308.

## **Week 7 – 01/11/2016 – Capacity Building and Ground Game**

Compulsory Reading:

- Get Out the Vote, chapters 1, 2, 3 and 12.
- Enos, Ryan D. and Eitan D. Hersh. 2015. Party Activists as Campaign Advertisers: The Ground Campaign as a Principal-Agent Problem. *American Political Science Review* 109(2): 252-278.
- Neuenschwander, Giordano and Florian Foos. Mobilizing Party Activism. A Field Experiment with Party Members and Sympathizers. Working Paper.

## **Week 8 – 08/11/2016 – Election Day: The Media and the Rise of Trump – Election Night Party 10pm - 3am**

- Free and earned media; traditional vs social media; priming and framing, do TV ads work?

Compulsory Reading:

- The Gamble, chapter 5.



- Gerber, Alan S., James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green and Daron W. Shaw. 2011. How Large and Long-lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment. *American Political Science Review* 105(1): 135-150.

Supplementary Reading:

- Broockman, David E. and Donald P. Green. 2015. Do Online Advertisements Increase Political Candidates' Name Recognition or Favorability? Evidence from Randomized Field Experiments. *Political Behavior* 36(2):263-289.
- Leeper, Thomas and Rune Slothuus. 2016. Can Citizens Be Framed? How Information, Not Emphasis, Changes Opinions. Working paper.

Election Night Party:

- We'll watch *Game Change* and *Mitt* followed by Election Returns on big screen live on CNN .
- Pizza and drinks will be provided.

**Week 9 – 15/11/2016 – Election Post Mortem & Data Workshop**

- Working with Campaign Data.

Compulsory Reading: Current blogs

**Week 10 – 22/11/2016 – Money and Politics**

- Campaign spending; does spending matter?; money and influence.

Compulsory Reading:

- Gerber, Alan. 1998. Estimating the effect of campaign spending on senate election outcomes using instrumental variables. *American Political Science Review* 92(2): 401-411.
- Kalla, Joshua L. and David E. Broockman. Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment. *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3):545-558.

## 5 Campaigns in Comparative Perspective

### Week 11 – 29/11/2016 – Campaigns in the UK

- The UK General Election Campaign 2015, the EU Referendum Campaign, Why did the polls get both outcomes wrong?

#### Compulsory Reading:

- Sturgis, Patrick. 2016. Report of the Inquiry into the 2015 British general election opinion polls.
- Fisher, Stephen. Why did the UK vote to leave the European Union? <https://electionsetc.com/2016/06/24/why-did-the-uk-vote-to-leave-the-european-union/>
- Foos, Florian, Kevin Cunningham and Peter John. How Issue Ownership Shapes Campaign Effects: A Field Experiment in the 2014 UK Elections. Working paper.

#### Supplementary Reading:

- Johnston, Ron, David Cutts, Charles Pattie, and Justin Fisher. 2012. We've got them on the list: Contacting, canvassing and voting in a British general election campaign. *Electoral Studies* 31(2): 317-329.
- Fieldhouse, Ed. 2015. Is Labour really too left-wing to win an election?  
<http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-findings/blog-update-is-labour-really-too-left-wing-to-win-an-election/#.V7msP4THtg0>

### Week 12 – 06/12/2016 – Campaigns in Switzerland

- 2015 federal elections, referenda and initiatives, Operation Libero
- **Guest Speaker: Marco Kistler (Swiss Social Democratic Party, Head of Movement Politics)**

#### Compulsory Reading:

- Bochsler, Daniel, Marlene Gerber and David Zumbach. 2015. The 2015 Swiss elections: A landslide win for the right, despite limited changes in vote share: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2015/10/24/the-2015-swiss-elections-a-landslide-win-for-the-right-despite-limited-changes-in-vote-shares/>
- Bechtel, Michael M., Dominik Hangartner, and Lukas Schmid. 2015. Does Compulsory Voting Increase Support for Leftist Policy? *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 752-767.

## Week 13 – 13/12/2016 – Campaigns Across Western Europe and North America

- Campaign experiments in other European and North American countries, generalizability
- **Please submit the draft of your research proposal at the latest on Friday, 9 December. Meetings take place during Week 13.**

### Compulsory Reading:

- Bhatti, Yosef, Jens Olav Dahlgaard, Jonas H. Hansen, and Kasper M. Hansen. 2016. Is door-to-door canvassing effective in Europe? Evidence from a meta-study across six European countries. *forthcoming in British Journal of Political Science*.
- Pons, Vincent. 2016. Will a Five Minutes Discussion Change your Mind? Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 16-079.

### Supplementary Reading:

- Cantoni, Enrico and Vincent Pons. Do Interactions With Candidates Increase Voter Support and Participation? Experimental Evidence from Italy. Working paper.
- Loewen, Peter John and Daniel Rubenson. 2011. For want of a nail: Negative persuasion in a party leadership race. *Party Politics* 17(1): 45-65.

## Week 14 – 20/12/2016 – Wrap Up Session

- Did the US Presidential campaign matter? If yes, how?